



UNITED STATES SENATOR ★ SERVING THE CITIZENS OF IDAHO

LARRY CRAIG

[HTTP://CRAIG.SENATE.GOV/PRESS/](http://craig.senate.gov/press/)

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
June 14, 2007

Dan Whiting (202) 224-8078
Sid Smith (208) 342-7985

CRAIG CITES CONCERN OVER SPENDING AS COMMITTEE APPROVES FIRST TWO BILLS FOR 2008

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Senate Appropriations Committee approved two fiscal year 2008 spending bills today – the Homeland Security and the Military Construction/Veterans Affairs Appropriations bills. Additionally, the Committee approved the allocations for each subcommittee.

Idaho Senator Larry Craig, a member of the Committee, expressed dismay over the excessive spending caps approved by the Committee, “Democrats have shown their true colors of taxing and spending. Today they approved over \$21 billion in new spending above and beyond the President’s budget. They have only two options – increase taxes or increase the deficit. Neither is acceptable.”

Craig expressed his deep concern over the VA budget in particular because of the astronomical funding increases included. Craig voted against the Military Construction/Veterans Affairs bill. “I agree that increases in some areas are needed. But those increases must be incremental and responsible. This bill is an increase of 17 percent over last year. That is simply unsustainable. I cannot support it.” Craig is the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

Craig supported the Homeland Security bill because of a number of important provisions. For starters, it delays the implementation of passport requirements for land/sea crossing from Canada or Mexico from January 1, 2008 until June 1, 2009 or until 3 months after certifying the existing requirements are met. Many Americans have had their foreign trips delayed or cancelled because of the backlog in approving passports.

Additionally, the bill has a number of important improvements to border security that build on Craig’s work with Senator Byrd to increase border security including:

- Hiring of 3,000 new border patrol agents
- 3,050 new detention beds
- \$100 million for Border Patrol-related construction
- \$190 million increase for port security grants
- \$200 million increase for rail security grants
- \$100 million increase for radiation detectors for cargo

Craig said, “Reforming immigration is about more than just guest workers – it has to include border security. Not improving border security was the mistake made in 1986. Senator Byrd and I have worked for a number of years to ensure the Border Patrol has the resources it needs. This bill takes us another step or two in that direction.”